

RESOLUTION REQUESTING A DETAILED PLAN FOR RETURNING ALL STUDENTS TO THE CLASSROOM BY A DATE CERTAIN

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic and the resulting series of the State of Maryland Executive Orders necessitated that school buildings in Frederick County remain closed from March 13, 2020 until present; and

WHEREAS, the health emergency necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to continue into the foreseeable future with Dr. Anthony Fauci saying that because of the background rate of infection it could be 2022 before we start having ‘some semblances of normality’; and

WHEREAS, the negative effects of all virtual learning on students are well known and include potentially lifelong academic deficits, achievement gaps, impaired social – emotional development, and mental health consequences; and

WHEREAS, attendance on campus provides the most optimal opportunities for personal, emotional, and educational growth, but it also allows students to participate in physical activities, receive special services as needed, and have proper nutrition; and

WHEREAS, the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Center for Disease Control, and the Maryland State Board of Education have advocated a return to in-person learning during the continued health emergency; and

WHEREAS, available research indicates that schools are not a main contributor to community spread of the COVID -19 virus with the best available information indicating school infection rates lower than community spread; and

WHEREAS comprehensive reporting in New York City, the state of Texas, and studies completed by Brown University demonstrate that in-person learning can be done responsibly and safely including utilization of hybrid learning models; and

WHEREAS, Frederick County is one of only 3 jurisdictions statewide that have provided no dates, metrics, or decisions for a return to in-person school; and

WHEREAS, even of the 50 largest school districts nationwide, only 11 are fully remote with no plans to change; and

WHEREAS, parents of Fredrick County students are in limbo with no guidance from the Frederick County Board of Education on when or if students will return to in-person learning;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Frederick County Council requests a detailed report from the Frederick County Board of Education by December 10, 2020 on the Board of Education’s plans to reopen in-person instruction in a way that protects the health and safety of our students, staff, and community, and allows our students the opportunity to grow and learn academically, socially, and emotionally; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the plan should include a date by which to return all students to at least some in-person instruction in Frederick County Public School Facilities provided certain community health metrics are met.